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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [NATO](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [KPAL](#) [EPET](#) [ENRG](#) [ZK](#)
IS, TU
SUBJECT: U/S BURNS' MEETING WITH TURKISH NATIONAL SECURITY
ADVISOR ALPOGAN

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary

11. (C) Turkish National Security Council President Yigit Alpoğan told U/S Burns January 19 that 2007 would be a challenging year for bilateral relations. The Turkish government hopes passage of an Armenian genocide resolution in the U.S. Congress can be averted, fears relations with the U.S. will be harmed by lack of progress on countering PKK terrorism from northern Iraq, and recommends postponement of an Iraqi referendum on the status of Kirkuk to prevent instability that could affect the entire region. U/S Burns said the U.S. will continue to work with Turkey and Iraq to diminish PKK violence, noting Special Envoy Ralston would visit the region at the end of January, but warned that Kirkuk must be solved by the Iraqis. Burns emphasized the importance of NATO success in Afghanistan and the need for a more aggressive strategy there, hoping Turkey and other ISAF contributors would consider eliminating national caveats and contributing additional troops. He said the U.S. considers Turkey's help essential as we seek to stabilize Iraq, promote peace in the Middle East, and confront Iranian ambitions. Both agreed that the U.S. and Turkey should cooperate more closely on Central Asia, particularly in the energy sphere. End Summary.

Armenia Genocide Resolution

12. (C) Alpoğan said anticipation of passage of an Armenian genocide resolution in the U.S. Congress is already causing turbulence in Turkish public opinion. He stated Turkey desires good relations with the Armenian people, highlighted GOT proposals for a joint historical commission and described current Turkish commercial ties with Armenia, including the presence of 40,000 Armenian workers and traders in Turkey. The U.S. must realize that such a resolution will damage its own interests in the region. He hoped a genocide resolution could be avoided, but said the government was prepared for "damage limitation" should it pass.

Iraq and the PKK

13. (C) Displaying a map of PKK terrorist camps in northern

Iraq, Alpogan stated that the Turkish public does not see how the PKK features in the U.S. global war on terrorism. He noted the Turkish parliament had debated Iraq on January 18 and would discuss the issue further in a closed session on January 23. The opposition is calling for a cross border operation. Alpogan said lack of action on the PKK will have a significant impact on U.S. - Turkish relations.

¶4. (C) U/S Burns said the U.S. Government understands its responsibilities to work with Turkey and Iraq to diminish the PKK's attacks on Turkish military and civilians, noting that Special Envoy Ralston would visit the region at the end of January. The U.S. is the PKK's enemy and is working with European countries to counter the organization. We want the Makhmour refugee camp closed; the recent weapons search conducted by Iraqi and Coalition security forces was a step in that direction. Burns assured Alpogan the U.S. would work this problem with Turkey and Iraq against the PKK but stated that Turkey must also work directly with the Iraqi government as well as Iraqi Kurd authorities.

Iraq and Kirkuk's Status

¶5. (C) Alpogan disagreed with U.S. statements that Kirkuk's status should be resolved by the Iraqis. He said that instability in Kirkuk would surely lead to civil war in Iraq; "as Kirkuk goes, so goes Iraq." Iraq's neighbors cannot remain indifferent to Kirkuk. Should a referendum give one ethnic group control over the city, nothing would hold Iran from dominating the Shi'a south while the Sunnis seize Iraq's center with al Qaeda's help. Iran's regional influence would grow rapidly and the "Shi'a crescent" from Iran to the eastern Mediterranean would extend to Egypt and beyond and

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become a "Shi'a circle." The GOT recommends postponement of a Kirkuk resolution by at least 18 months, perhaps to coincide with the planned referendum on Iraqi federalism.

¶6. (C) Burns encouraged Turkey to voice its concerns to the GOI but warned that Kirkuk is an issue of Iraqi national sovereignty. NEA PDAS James Jeffrey said the U.S. understands Kirkuk's importance, but there are many other critical issues the GOI must tackle as well. He recommended that Turkey respect Iraqi sensibilities and not lecture the Iraqis on their constitution. The Iraqis are proud and will strongly resist what they perceive as outside interference in their political decisions.

NATO and Getting Afghanistan Right

¶7. (C) Turning to U.S. priorities, U/S Burns stressed the importance of strengthening the U.S. - Turkey partnership in the NATO alliance and hoped for a stronger Turkish voice at NATO. The major challenge is Afghanistan; ISAF needs a more aggressive strategy and the U.S. is planning an increased effort there in 2007 which could involve additional troops, as Secretary Gates had said on his trip there. Turkey's contributions to ISAF and establishment of a PRT in Wardak are greatly appreciated, but more troops are needed in the key southern provinces of Helmand, Oruzgan and Kandahar. The U.S. is looking to Turkey, Germany, France and Italy for help. Besides additional troop contributions, ISAF contributing countries should also remove national caveats on the employment of their ISAF forces, Burns stressed.

U.S. Goals in the Middle East

¶8. (C) Burns stated that U.S. - Turkish consultation and cooperation would be crucial to other U.S. priorities in the region, including forging a peace between Israel-Palestine, helping the government of Lebanon resist pressures from Hezbollah backed by Iran, and curbing Iranian nuclear and

political ambitions.

Central Asia and Energy

¶9. (C) Beyond the Middle East, Burns identified Central Asia as an important area for bilateral cooperation. U.S. relations with Tajikistan and Kazakhstan are good, and are slowly improving with Uzbekistan. The death of Turkmenbashi may open opportunities for better relations with Turkmenistan. Alpogan responded positively, noting that Turkey cannot forge strong ties there on its own. The EU seems rather uninterested in the area. Alpogan focused on energy as an area for U.S. - Turkish cooperation and he hoped work on trans-Caspian gas could resume. Working together, Turkey and the U.S. can provide outlets for Central Asian energy, through the Caucasus as well as the Indian Ocean, that bypass Russia. Such projects will help the Central Asian countries stand alone, creating conditions for more democracy and human rights there.

¶10. (C) Ambassador noted that senior U.S. officials would soon be coming to Turkey for Economic Partnership Commission talks and energy would be a focus. The U.S. is also trying to set up a U.S. - Turkey - Iraq energy working group to explore the export of Iraqi gas through Turkey to European markets. Alpogan welcomed U.S. interest, stating Turkey hopes to become an energy hub and transit country with the goal of reducing Turkey's, and Europe's, dependence on energy from Russia.

¶11. (U) U/S Burns has cleared this message.

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